Project I.D. No.89

NAME: TANOUYE, MASAYE Tanoue, Masae DATE OF BIRTH: 1900 PLACE OF BIRTH: Kumamoto
Age: 74 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: Grammar school

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1918 Age: 18 M.S. P.B. Port of entry: Honolulu
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer's wife 2. Bakery business 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Wahiwa, Honolulu 2. Kumamoto, Japan 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION: In Japan
Name of assembly center: _____
Name of relocation center: _____
Dispensation of property: _____ Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: _____

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: 1953
Address/es: 1. Ross, Ca. 2. San Francisco
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Husband died in Hawaii.

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 8/9/74 Place: San Francisco
Translater: Mabel Hall

corrected spelling of respondent's name Rei Asako Tokuno

Q: Where were you born?

A: Kumamoto Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: March 20, 1900.

Q: Then are you 74 years old?

A: I am about 74½ years old.

Q: What kind of a family are you from?

A: My father worked as a policeman and a school teacher. I was brought up in a strict family. I am still old fashioned.

Q: What kind of things do you remember about your father? Were you scolded often?

A: I was scolded from morning till night. What I remember most is that when I walked by the bed where grandmother was sleeping, I walked by with my head bowed. I should treat my parents like that, but they are not alive, and if I say such thing to my children they say I am crazy. When we went to movies at night we came home late as there were no automobiles in those days. Father was still staying up kindling charcoal in a hibachi (brazier). He would not let us go without asking what the movie was about. He said the movies are based on either loyalty or obedience to parents, so he asked me which category I thought the movie belonged to. He asked such question to me when I was only 12 or 13 years old. Mother was a very gentle person, but father was a strict man.

Q: What else do you remember about your childhood?

A: The rest is just everyday affairs, so I don't remember much.

Q: How about school? Did you go to school?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: How much schooling did you have?

A: I went as far as junior high school, and then I learned sewing and weaving. I also learned manners, but I came here when I was young. My father was adopted into our family from a neighboring old family. His mother seemed to have brought him up by herself.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: There were six brothers and sister, but one brother died when he was 19 years old. There are only two living now.

Q: Was your family's religion Buddhism?

A: Yes, it was Buddhism.

Q: Which sect of Buddhism was it?

A: It was Shinshu.

Q: Was your village a big one or a small one?

A: It was quite a large village.

Q: Do you have any happy memories about your schooldays?

A: I was a leader in ping-pong and tennis at school. I climbed trees, played ping-pong and tennis. Baseball was mostly for boys, so girls did not have much chance of playing it. I was in all kinds of sports.

Q: Did your family own land? Your family didn't farm, didn't they?

A: We had some land, but when I was little we had tenant farmers take care of it. I don't remember if our family was farming or not.

Q: Where did your father get a credential to be a teacher? Did he attend a teachers' college?

A: I don't think there was such thing in those days. I heard that a scholar named Mr. Yabu did not have any place to go around 10th year of Meiji because of a war. My father's uncle let him stay at his house as a guest for 9 years. Mr. Yabu's grave is still there. It seems that the family members of my father's uncle were all educated by him. My father belonged to Sagawa family, and people in that family were all well-educated. In those days there were just private elementary schools, but not many people, even boys, attended them. As Mr. Yabu was there for 9 years, he educated the whole family.

Q: Did anything big happen in your village when you were young?

A: It was a peaceful village, so nothing big happened. There were some struggles between political parties.

Q: What kind of struggles were there?

A: I do not remember well as I was a child. My father was arrested for the violation of election law.

Q: How did he violate the election law?

A: I do not know what the circumstance was as I was not in Japan then. I heard that he was in jail for quite a while as he would not say anything. He belonged to Seiyukai party.

Q: Do you remember about the Sino-Japanese War?

A: I just remember seeing the soldiers off. I think I was about 7 years old then. I used to take pages out from magazines and distributed them immitating the paper boy selling extras. I barely remember my grandmother taking me to see soldiers off at a carriage stop.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I think I was 5 or 6 years old.

Q: Was there a Christian church in your village?

A: No, there wasn't. I heard that there was a Christian church in the hill on the outskirt of the village.

Q: Were the Christians called "Yaso" in those days?

A: Yes, they were called "Yaso". A man from our village came to America. He went back to Japan with a child born from a white woman, and was teaching a school. The son grew up to be a Christian priest. I heard that he was married to Takuboku Ishikawa's sister, and is a high ranking priest now.

Q: Under what circumstance did you come to America?

A: My parents told me to go to America, so I came here. In those days we obeyed whatever our parents told us to do. Since they told me that I had better go to America as there was a man who wanted a wife, I came here.

Q: What was your husband's name?

A: It was Shigeru Tanouye.

Q: Have you met Mr. Tanouye before?

A: No, I never met him before.

Q: Did you recieve a photograph from him?

A: I received it after we were engaged. I think my parents knew him.

Q: Did you marry him as your parents told you to marry him?

A: Yes, but I was not too happy. His cousin was married to my brother so we were related.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 17 years old. I did not know if I should get married or not, but as my parents told me I had to get married.

Q: Then you were to come to America?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you leave from Kobe?

A: I left from Yokohama.

Q: Did you have the wedding before you left Japan?

A: Both families knew each other, but he was over here.

Q: In Japan, all they had to do was to have your name listed in the census record, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Do you remember when ~~it was that~~ you left from Japan?

A: I think it was September or October.

Q: Do you remember the name of the ship?

A: It was Korea-Maru.

Q: Do you remeber what year it was? Was it around 1917 or 1918?

A: I think it was.

Q: What kind of people were on board the ship?

A: On board the ship there were quite a few people whom I knew, some old and some young people who were going to America for the first time.

Q: Were there many women who were coming here as brides?

A: I knew many women who were coming here as brides.

Q: What do you remember about the trip on board the ship?

A: We chattered all day long.

Q: Didn't you get seasick?

A: No, I didn't, but some people got seasick and stayed in bed with headbands, so I wondered why they do that.

Q: Did you have any difficulties on board the ship?

A: As I was young I didn't have much trouble.

Q: Were you happy?

A: I was not as happy as some people today. People nowadays are very happy to come to America even if there is nobody they know over here.

Q: Did you have anxiety?

A: I felt uneasy as I did not know what kind of husband was waiting for me. Eighteen year old is still a child.

Q: You were brave to come here all by yourself, weren't you?

A: As many of my friends were coming here, I came with them.

Q: Where did the ship arrive?

A: It came to Hawaii, so it arrived at Honolulu.

Q: Did you land at Honolulu?

A: The ship's destination was Hawaii, so we landed there.

Q: Did you recognize your husband right away?

A: No, I didn't as I was imagining my husband to be a handsome man. When the ship arrived at the port we were taken to the Immigration office. At first we lay down for a while. In the afternoon we were put out in a plaza and stayed there all day. People from outside gave us fruits and drinks. We could not see each other nor talk.

Q: How many days did you stay there?

A: We were there for about 3 days.

Q: Did you take a physical examination?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: Did you have any trouble then?

A: I just wanted to lie down anywhere. We had the physical examination at Yokohama, so if there was nothing wrong we did not have to take a physical examination there. I was scared as I heard that we had to stay there forever. I think in those days no other race but Japanese were put in one place together. On the third day they put us in a small room and called our names one by one. We looked for the husbands, and they looked for their wives. Everyone thought their husbands would be good looking, but there were men with dark skin. Comparing with photographs women would say, "My husband is not there." At first I was bashful so I did not look, but as others told me to look, I did. When my name was called I went out. The other side did the same. Then for the first time I met my husband, and I thought he was not too good looking.

Q: How did you feel when you met Mr. Tanouye for the first time?

A: I felt like meeting a stranger for the first time, and I did not get a feeling that was my husband.

Q: Did you feel like meeting a stranger?

A: Yes, it was like meeting a stranger. If I had met him or talked with him before I would have felt relieved to have arrived here safely, no matter what kind of a man the husband was, but I just wondered how my future would be. I had to part company with my friends there without saying good-bye, so I felt lonesome, and worried about my future.

Q: How old was Mr. Tanouye then?

A: I think he was 23 years old.

Q: He was a young man then, wasn't he?

A: I thought he was an old man then.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: He took me to a hotel and we stayed there two or three days to do some shopping. I followed him so that I wouldn't lose him. He was just a stranger to me then. Strangely enough we spent our lives together.

Q: How did you greet him when you met him for the first time?

A: I don't think I said any greetings. There wasn't anything to say.

Q: Did you just follow him without saying anything?

A: He asked me if that was all the luggage I had. I don't think he had anything to say as it was the first time he met me. He said he waited there for 2 to 3 days. We went to a hotel on a carriage, but he still didn't talk to me. When someone came to see him at the hotel he talked with him drinking beer. I just greeted him, but I just sat there bored.

Q; What kind of a job did he have then?

A: He had a job working in a sugar cane field.

Q: Didn't you live in Honolulu?

A: We lived in Waialua. Then there was a strike, so we moved to Wahiwa. He worked in a store in Wahiwa for a while, and I stayed home and did the housework.

Q: Didn't you work right away?

A: I was put to work in the sugar cane field. It was hot and sugar cane stalks hurt my skin. As I have sensitive skin, it pealed. We stayed there for about 2 years.

Q: Did you think it was better you had not come?

A: I wanted to go back to Japan, but I did not have the money.

Q: Did you write letters to your home?

A: I was doing the work I was not used to, so it was hard to write letters. Once in a while I wrote letters, but that did not do any good. If I had money I could go home.

Q: How long did you live in Hawaii?

A: I think we lived there for about 10 years. When we went back to Japan one time Lily was 3 years old.

Q: Did you go back to Japan after 10 years?

A: Yes.

Q: How many children did you have then?

A: I had 3 children.

Q: Did you work after the children were born?

A: No, When the children were born we were living in Wahiwa. Then we moved to Honolulu.

Not long after we went to Hawaii, we went to visit his aunt in Maui. There I felt sick and did not want to get up, but I got up as I was not in my home. When we went home after a week we found out that our fiends wife had died of flu. Many people were not working because of flu. In the meantime the husband of the dead woman had the flu and was hospitalized. They had 4 children, 2 daughters and 2 sons. We took 2 older children to our home, and took care of the 2 small children at their home. As a small child cried for her father and would not sleep, my husband and I carried the child in turn and went back and forth between our house and their house all night long. Then their father died, so we held a funeral and took the children to their relative's in Honolulu. These children have grown up and now and have grandchildren of their own now.

Q: Did many people die from flu then?

A: About 6 people died among 17 families.

Q: Were they all Japanese?

A: Almost all of them were Japanese.

Q: Were there any white people?

A: The boss was a white man, and there were some Chinese in the back, they did not catch the flu, only Japanese did. We were wondering if Chinese were healthy because they ate garlic.

Q: Didn't you catch the flu?

A: I felt dull, so I wanted to go home. My husband did not fell well either.

Q: What other things happened while you were in Hawaii for 10 years?

A:

Q: What did your husband do after he moved to Honolulu from Wahiwa?

A: He worked at a bakery.

Q: When you came to Hawaii from Japan, did you think it was a nice place or a hard place?

A: I thought it was a nice place as we did not have to draw water from a well. But it was hot and did not have four seasons like in Japan. After children were born there was no use going back to Japan as we did not have property there to live on. That is why we saved money just because we wanted to go back to Japan.

Q: Did Mr. Tanouye had an intention of going back to Japan?

A: We had an intention of going back to Japan after the children grew up. In those days few people had intention of making this place their last home.

Q: Why did you go back to Japan? Did you want to see your parents?

A: I did not have an intention of going back to Japan then, but as Matsumotos were going back to Japan and asked me to go with them I decided to go to Japan. My husband told me to leave one or two children here with him, but I did not want to leave them here, so I took them with me.

Q: Did you take all 3 of them with you?

A: Yes, I did. My husband told me that I should have left at least one child with him. He said he was very lonesome.
I got scarlet fever on board the ship going to Japan. I was up for a few days after I arrived in Japan, but my condition became worse so I was hospitalized for about 3 to 4 months. All my hair fell off. I stayed in Japan for about a year then.

Q: Were there any riots or violence during the strike in Waialua?

A: No, nothing like that happened. There was a fire in the sugar cane field at one time. At that time all the workers went out to extinguish it. Japanese workers did not play around as some Americans would have.

Q: Did the fire break out during the strike?

A: Yes, it did.

Q: Did all the workers go out to extinguish the fire?

A: Yes, they did. The fire might have been started by the strikers but everyone went out and extinguished the fire in an orderly manner.

Q: Was the strike about the wages?

A: I think so.

Q: What else happened while you were in Hawaii?

A: A few people representing the laborers negotiated, so the rest of the workers stayed home.

Q: Around what time did you used to get up in those days?

A: We got up around 6 o'clock in the morning to go to the field.

Q: When did you eat?

A: I cooked after I came home from work.

Q: Did you take lunch with you?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Around what time did you come home?

A: Around 5:30 or 6. There were no cars in those days, so we had to go up the hill to work, and came down the hill to go home. I think we started working around 8 o'clock so we had to leave home early in order to get to work in time.

Q: Did you think the work was hard in those days?

A: I didn't like the work, but it was not too hard for me as I was young.

Q: Were there houses for couples to live in?

A: There were houses for the whole family.

Q: Were they individual houses?

A: Yes, in those days there were houses for each family, and the houses were separated by streets. The houses were like barracks and the floor was made of planks. The climate was warm so it was not cold. We either used floor covering or did not use anything and brushed it down with soap and water on our days off. We were busy on Sundays as we scrubbed the floor and did the laundry. The soil was red dirt so our feet were dyed red.

Side 2

Q: When you had your babies did a midwife help you?

A: Yes.

Q: About how many midwives were there?

A: There were many of them in Wahiwa as it was a town. There were many in Honolulu, too.

Q: How did you feel when you went back to Japan and saw your parents?

A: I became ill on board the ship with 3 small children.

Q: Were you happy to see your mother?

A: Yes, I was. At the same time, I knew I had to go back to America, so I had a mixed emotion.

Q: You had to go back to America, didn't you?

A: Children were reaching the age of start going to school.

Q: Did the children speak English or Japanese then?

A: They spoke mostly Japanese.

Q: What did you do after you went back to Hawaii?

A: We had bought a house, so we lived there.

Q: Were you living in Honolulu then?

A: Yes, we were. I was kept busy sending children to school.

Q: Your husband must have been successful to be able to buy a house.

A: He was not successful, but he was a patient man.

Q: Was he a serious man?

A: He was a serious man. After he founded the Kumamoto Kenjin-Kai he became ill and died.

Q: What did he die of?

A: I think he had a kidney trouble. He was in a hospital for a year. His hobby was to raise Japanese white-eye (bird) and enter them in contests. At one time he was arrested by the police, but he bribed the children with icecream so that they won't tell me.

Q: Why was he arrested?

A: Many white-eye birds used to come. He would put birdlime on the bird cage and hang it on an avacado tree. Then he would hide somewhere and call the birds. When the birds were caught, he cleaned them of birdlime and kept them. At one time he went to catch the birds on the hill, not knowing that it was a National Park. While he was hiding, he was caught by a policeman, who told him that he had to pay the fine for catching birds in a National Park. My husband told the policeman that he did not know about it. When the policeman asked my husband if he read the newspaper, my husband said that he came from Japan and did not know English, so he did not read the paper. He paid about $5 fine and let go the birds. He even let go the birds he had before, so he stopped at a pet shop and bought some white eyes and put them in the cage. I did not care a bit about the birds, but I think he did that to deceive me.

Q: What other hobbies did he have?

A: He liked baseball and everything else. He used to take me and children to baseball games, too. At one time he told me he was going to take me to a movie. I said I saw a movie that week, but he told me that there is another one, I thought it was strange but I went with him. He took me to a place where there was a wrestling match. He said his friends were there so let's stop and watch it, so we went to watcha wrestling match. I would rather stayed home and slept, but he took me with him. I think he did that because he would feel guilty going there by himself.

Q: What is your hobby?

A: I studied all kind of things.

Q: What kind of thing did you study?

A: I studied pedagogy. To study that I had to learn the history of pedagogy, so I studied history of Japanese pedagogy and of Chinese pedagogy. And to learn history of Chinese pedagogy I had to study Chinese literature. I also studied history of Roman pedagogy which I have forgotten already. I just remember history of Japanese pedagogy

Q: Did you studied those in Hawaii?

A: Yes, I did. I also learned needle craft.

Q: Did you go to school or did you learn those from tutors?

A: I attended a private school.

Q: Were the teachers Japanese?

A: Yes, they were. My teacher was a graduate of Waseda University. He was a good teacher.

Q: About how many students were there?

A: They were varied depending on the class. There were many students.

Q: Were there many students about your age?

A: The teacher was surprised that Japanese people who were engaged in humble jobs were good at learning Chinese literature and other things. There were many of them, young and old.

Q: About how long did you go to the school?

A: About a year.

Q: Was it after your children were born?

A: Yes, it was after my husband died. Before he became ill, I used to learn needlecraft. I cannot work much, but I never stay idle at home.

Q: How about utai? (Noh song)

A: My husband learned utai.

Q: What has become of your income after your husband died?

A: I hired a driver to do the work.

Q: What kind of a work were you doing then?

A: We were in bakery business. We took orders and delivered the bread. We hired a driver to deliver the bread.

Lily (daughter): After my father quit farming and went to Honolulu he had been in bakery business. We had a bread delivery truck. As my father liked children he took neighborhood children for a ride on the truck. Everyone had to lie down on the shelves of the truck. It was fun. I remember father taking us to baseball games when Waseda team came, or took us to beach.

Mrs. T: We went to Bon dance every night. In Hawaii it was not cold like it is over here, so we enjoyed the cool of the evening.

Lily: I think it was the year Father died that you were elected the president of P.T.A. although you could not speak English.

Mrs. T: My husband was still alive then. I had to give a speech from a platform.

Lily: There are many Japanese in Hawaii, and they live together like a Japanese town. There were some white pupils, but most of the pupils in our elementary school were Japanese, so my mother was elected the president of the P.T.A. She didn't know about it. She worked hard for the school children, so that is why she was elected the president of the P.T.A.

Mrs. T: I worked hard to purchase a see-saw and other equipments for the school. There was a baseball field adjacent to the school, and the balls used to come flying in and scared women teachers, so I went to the City Hall and asked to have a watchman there in the afternoon.

Lily: That is why people elected as a president thinking you could speak English well.

Q: After you became the president of the P.T.A. did you preside over the meetings?

A: No, but when the playground was finished, I had to give an address from a high platform.

Lily: It was an English elementary school, but I remeber her giving the address in Japanese. Did someone interpret for you?

Mrs.T: Mr. Nakamura did. He even went to picnic with me and interpreted for me.

Q: About how old were you then?

A: I think I was in my 30s.

Q: People in Hawaii were sensible to let you speak in Japanese, weren't they.

A: In a way, it was because Mr. Nakamura wanted to interpret. He was a Japanese teacher.

Lily: May Day in Hawaii was an international holiday, and people wore costumes of their native country.

Mrs. T: We had fun then.

Q: You had courage, didn't you?

A: I didn't have courage , but I was pushed into that position. When Mr. Nakamura could not do the interpretation, Mr. Izumi did.

Q: Were there many Japanese teachers in that school?

A: No, there was only one.

Q: Were you ever treated with discrimination by white people in those days?

A: No, I never knew such thing as there were many Japanese. I heard that the P.T.A. president before me was a Filippino.

Q: Did you continue the business by hiring people while your husband was ill for a year?

A: I hired a driver to dirve the truck, and a sitter to take care of my children.

Q: Did you take care of the business?

A: I went to the hospital.

Q: Did you go to the hospital everyday?

A: Yes, I did from morning.

Q: What time did you go in the morning?

A: After I sent the children to school, I went there ~~with~~ taking my youngest child with me.

Q: What time did you come home?

A: I stayed there Till about 9 p.m. when the visiting hour was over.

Q: Did you continue that for about a year?

A: For 8 months. Then, after he came home from the hospital I took care of him at home.

Q: Was he discharged from the hospital?

A: Yes, he came home before he died. I did everything for him, so I know as much about nursing as nurses do. His friends donated blood one after another. I said I should give my blood before everyone else, and I gave my blood first. Dr. Miyamoto was surprised and said, "We should not have taken blood from you who is so tired." After that his friends donated blood, and then I gave blood again. My husband's 3 brothers, myself and friends, altogether 6 or 7 people gave blood, but it was to no avail so we stopped it.

Q: What else did they do for him at the hospital?

A: In those days there was no machines to look into the kidney as they do today, so the doctor injected some drug and took X-rays of his kidney and did all kinds of other things. He showed me some specimen of urine under a microscope and explained to me what was what. He must have thought I would understand if he explained the condition of the disease to me by showing me those things rather than telling me about it.

Q: When did he die?

A: In 1936 or 1937. He was only 42 years old.

Q: Was there Depression in Hawaii around 1933?

A: We kept on working, so I did not know there was Depression.

Lily: My father had many hobbies, but he was a man of perseverance. He was also generous, and helped others in need. He busied himself till late at night for Kumamoto Kenjin-Kai, so he had many friends. That is why his friends were good to him when he was ill.

Q: Did you have a big funeral when he died?

A: Yes, we did. Many people who had business connection attended the funeral. Dr. Miyamoto discharged him from the hospital about a month before he died so that he could die at home. He stayed in bed all the time. When I took him to the toilet I put a hot water bottle under his feet, and a blanket over him to keep him warm. After I took him back to bed, I checked his stoool to see if the food was digested so that I knew what kind of food was good for him. He was alert until he died. I think he didn't want to die. A year after he died I decided to go to Japan.

Q: Did you go to school then or later?

A: If I stayed home people would come and talk about this and that so I decided to leave the home.

Q: Did you go to Japan about a year after your husband died?

A: A year or two after he died, and everything was finished I went to Japan. That was just a few years before the war broke out. It was difficult for me to travel all the way to Kumamoto with children, so I waited for my brother to graduage from school so that he could go to Japan with us.

Q: How many children did you have then?

A: I had 5 children.

Q: Did you sell your business?

A: I sold my business, but I leased the house to someone who would sell it for me.

Q: Did you go back to Japan in 1938?

A: Yes, and I put 3 older children in a high school, and Lily and another child in elementary school. Then the war broke out. The second son went into the Navy as an officers' candidate as soon as he graduated from high school. Lily went to the Red Cross nurses training school, so only the youngest child stayed home. Daughter Fujiko who is the younger sister of Lily died 2 months after we went to Japan.

Q: (Lily) You were going back to Hawaii leaving the children in Japan then, weren't you?

A: No, I wanted to go back to Hawaii after the children grew up. How could I leave the children in care of others? In those days how could I find a job with children, and without being able to understand English in Hawaii. Over here even old people or people who do not understand English can work.

Q: Did you have money to send children to school?

A: I had a little money. Later the house we had in Hawaii was sold.

Q: Did you work?

A: No, I couldn't as I had to take care of the children. Ones who went to elementary school could get along, but the oldest in high school did not understand anything so I had to help him with his study at night time.

Q: Were you parents still alive then?

A: My mother died before I went back to Japan. My father died not long after I went home.

Q: Then you brought up the children all by youself, didn't you?

A: Yes, I had to take care of them about the school and everything else, so it was hard as it is not as convenient as it is over here.

Q: Did you experience the air raid?

A: Yes, but we just had to hide. As we did not live in the city, the air raid was not too bad. Sometimes I went to see how it was in the city worrying about the people there. Many planes flew over us every morning. I think it was the route for B-12s to bomb Kumamoto City.

Q: Were your sons inducted into Japanese Army?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Were you under the eye of Japanese military or police because you were in America?

A: No, but we received very little ration of food as we were not farmers. We barely survived.

Q: Did you live in your father's house?

A: No, we repaired a house which belonged to my husband's family and lived in it.

Q: Did you lack food during and after the war?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: You were in your 40s then, weren't you?

A: Yes, I was not even 50 years old.

Side 3

Q: Were you hard up for food during and after the war?

A: Yes, we were.

Q: You were in your 40s then weren't you?

A: Yes, I wasn't even 50 years old.

Q: Did you go food hunting?

A: As we lived in the country we could buy some food from our neighbors so we had enough for old people and small children. But I was worried about the older children who had evacuated, so I went to visit them. I had that much energy then. We ate pumpkin, sweet potatoe and rationed barley and rice which was inedible. However, we ate them as we know that there was nothing else to eat. Yet we were better off in the country. My daughter-in-law in Fukuoka told me that she received ration of soy bean lees. When I asked her what was that for, she told me that it was their food. We had some unsavory flour rationed, so we made some dumplings and ate them, but we did not get soy bean lees rationed.

My second son's wife told me that she was burned out and lost everything in Kokura, so she went to Kagoshima turning for her relations for help. Fortunately, fish came up on the beach, so if they had enough to eat they peddled the rest to make a living. Everybody has same kind of stories about those days. Whenever people got together they talked about food.

Q: Did Lily come to America first?

A: Yes, she did. She wanted to come to America as she had no worry about being inducted into service. The Sakai family on the other side of the hill was related to our family. His uncle who was the village master of the adjacent village went around with packed lunch looking for a suitable wife for his nephew. When he went to the house of the uncle of my daughter-in-law, he was told that there is a daughter in the family where his niece is married. She is good at school work and is getting ready to go to America. Then they came to our house and asked for the hands of my daughter. They said if we refuse, they would come back every day and drink sake. I told them that my daughter was not good looking, so they had better meet her before they decide. They said that as I was not bad looking, my daughter would be all right. I told them to come back when my daughter comes home, because even if I consent for the marriage, my daughter might say, "no". About a week later they came back.

Q: Where was she then?

A: She was working in Kumamoto City. When they came they pestered her.

Lily: I said I would not marry a man I did not know. They they said they would stay there that night. They would drink until I consent.

Q: Did you consent then?

A: I said if his parents say O.K. she can marry him, so they left in a hurry to write a letter to his home. His uncle was so happy he found a good bride that he walked down the street shouting, "We got the best bride in Japan!" That is how she came to America.

Q: When was that?

A: It was when Lily was 23 years old. It was 1948. She said she was going to Hawaii all by herself, but I was worried about her becoming ill and I wouldn't be able to go and see her right away. She had to get married sooner or later, so I thought she might as well get married then and I would not have to be worried. My family, also, told me that if I had let her go to Hawaii alone I would be very worried, so I decided to let her get married.

Q: Didn't she complain?

A: She complained, but I didn't force her to get married. She told me that she would go if I thought it was all right.

Q: What happened after 1948?

Lily: My youngest sister Kiku came in 1951, and then my brother called mother in 1953.

Q: What about your sons?

Lily: As my brother was inducted into Japanese Army, my mother had difficult times.

Ms. T: Shizuo had asked for persmission to be sent back to Hawaii but he was rejected every time. He wrote us every week telling us that he had not received the approval. After waiting anxiously for 7 months he finally recieved the approval. He was very happy. They told him at the American Consulate to use the word "protested" instead of "refused" the induction into Japanese Army. When he used that word in his application, he got the approval.

When I was coming back from Japan I thought my two children whom I was going to leave in Japan would like to go to America, too, so I should summon them over there. That is why I went to the American Consulate and asked what can be done about my two children. They told me that there is a way. After I came back to America I went to a lawyer and asked him to do something to summon them. He read me a secret document and gave me a copy of it. On my way home from there I stopped at a friend's house and wrote a letter and mailed it. It was approved right away. Since that time it has become easier to summon people from Japan. It took only a bottle of whiskey to summon my second son over here. Lawyers usually do not help the clients unless they have money.

Lily: My mother saved all the money she earned from doing housework in a family in Ross in Marin County, and summoned all her children here; my brothers and their wives and children. She worked all her life for her children.

Q: About how much salary were you earning in those days?

A: I started from $140 a month, and it was increased to $160.

Q: Did it cost about 400 yen to come to America by a ship in those days?

A: It cost 380 yen by plane. I heard that a chauffer was surprised that a Japanese woman could save so much money. I was a little short of money, so I loaned some but I paid it back right away. Then my oldest son had trouble getting an approval, but he finally got it. I did everything I should do, so I did not feel it was hard for me.

Q: Did you live in the same family for a long time?

A: As my second son came from America, I left the family and worked here and there.

Q: Did you do the housework?

A: I did the housework, so it was hard. As I worked mostly at single people's house, I felt as if I was taking care of my own children, so I it was not too hard.

Q: You didn't have worries, didn't you?

A: As I am a scrupulous person I worried, but sometimes it benefited me.

Q: When did you acquire the American citizenship?

A: Five years after I came back from Japan.

Q: How long did you work?

A: Till I became ill the year before last. I worked till a day before I had operation, then I went to the hospital. As I took care of myself, and my children were here my illness didn't get too bad.

Q: Did you come to San Francisco after you quit the family in Ross?

A: Yes, I have been in San Francisco ever since then.

Q: How long did you live in Ross?

A: Two years. On the second year my second son came from Japan.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you have in Ross and San Francisco while you were doing housework?

A: The hardest thing was that I did not understand English. The housework was not too hard. By the time I came to San Francisco I knew what to do, but when I first went to Ross I did not know how to act when the guests came as I had never been a maid. I had a hard time then.

Lily: As she came from a good family in Japan she had a pride, so it was hard for her to be a maid to others until she got used to it. Her brother was a member of a prefectural assembly, so people in Japan did not believe when she told them what she did.

Mrs. T. They would not believe what I told them. They thought I was telling a fib. Actually I worked harder than others. That is why people whom I worked for still associate me as a friend. They send me cards every year, and come and see me when they come this way. One of my former master calls me or sends me presents. I worked at their homes as if they were my own, so I did not have any cares.

When my children came over here I made arrangements with the Immigration Office and acted as a witness. They asked me if I could support them.

Lily: My brother's children all came from Japan, and with my mother as the witness they all acquired their citizenship.

Mrs. T.: I don't know how many times I went to the Immigration Office. My oldest son was too lazy to go to the Immigration Office, so I went there for him. They asked me questions, so I told them that my son had trouble as he was inducted in Japanese Army. I did not know whether he lost his American citizenship or not, but I would leave them up to them.

People say I must had a hard time, but at that time I was desparate so I did not think it was hard. I just thought I accomplished what I wanted to do, so I did not think it was hard. As for money, I had only 10 to 15 dollars with me.

Q: What do you think about young people studying about Japan now?

A: I think it is good, as Japan is their ancestors' country. If they do not know anything about Japan they would not know where they belong, and how their ancestors lived. As I told you before, I took my children to my native village thinking about reparing and bringing them up in the old house where my ancestors lived, and visiting my ancestors' graves.

Q: What do you want to tell Sanseis and Yonsei about important things in their lives?

A: It depends on how you think. If you teach just Japanese way of thinking it would be too rigid. I do not enough education to teach them that.

Q: Is there anything you want to teach your grandchildren?

A: Even if I want to teach them something I cannot do that as I cannot speak English. If I try to say something they might misunderstand me.

Q: If your grandchildren understand you, what do you want to teach them?

A: There are many things I want to teach them, but it would be hard for children who grew up over here to do this and that. I am not qualified to do that unless I have more education here.

Q: In Japan they say that is it good for a person to experience hardship. What is your opinion on it? Do you think it is important for Sanseis and Yonseis to experience hardships?

A: It is good for a person to experience hardships, but too much hardships can cause inferiority complex so it is not good. Future generations have to be independent of their parents and have their own families, so if they depend on their parents and cannot take care of themselves they will have a hard time when they grow up. I would like to tell that to young people but I cannot.

Lily: She has four children, and every one of them wants to take care of her after she became ill but she is stubborn and would not go.

Q: Why don't you?

A: Every one of my children wants me to come and live with them, and I am in a fortunate position of being able to go and live with any one of them. Each family is diffirent. In some family the wife has to work. If I become very ill someone have to stay home and take care of me. I still want to live alone and take care of myself, and when I become too weak to take care of myself I will go and live with one of them who can take care of me. Until that time comes, I don't think I have to decide now where to go to.

In Japan the oldest son inherits the property and takes care of his parents, and even if he fails in business the parents would live with them. I want to take care of myself until I am unable to do so because I do not want to trouble my children. I help them as much as I can now, and they will be able to take care of me.

I don't know about other old people, but that is the way I feel. When I go to Kimochi Kai in San Francisco I hear complaints from old people saying that they are in need of money. I try not to become needy.